

# SNAP for Immigrants and Mixed-Status Families in D.C.



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# Introduction to D.C. Hunger Solutions

- ❑ Founded as an initiative of the Food Research and Action Center in 2002, D.C. Hunger Solutions seeks to create a hunger-free community and improve the nutrition, health, economic security, and well-being of low-income District residents by:
  - ❑ Improving public policies to end hunger, reduce poverty, promote nutrition, and increase the availability of healthy, affordable food in low-income areas;
  - ❑ Maximizing participation in all federal nutrition programs; and
  - ❑ Educating the public about both the stark reality of hunger's existence in the midst of plenty and the real opportunities for effective solutions.



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# Topics to Be Covered

- ❑ Overview of Food Insecurity
- ❑ D.C. Landscape
- ❑ SNAP Refresher
- ❑ Immigrant Eligibility for SNAP
- ❑ Executive Orders and Public Charge
- ❑ Other Supports for Immigrant Households
- ❑ Q+A



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# Food Insecurity in the U.S.

- ❑ The USDA defines food insecurity as, "a household-level economic and social condition of limited or uncertain access to adequate food."  
(Rabbitt, M. P., Reed-Jones, M., Hales, L. J., & Burke, M. P. (2024))
  
- ❑ In 2023,
  - Roughly 14% of households in the US reported experiencing food insecurity at least once during the year
  
  - Among households with children, roughly 18% reported food insecurity
  
  - Households made up of Black and Hispanic individuals experienced higher food insecurity than other groups at 23.3% and 21.9% respectively

# Food Insecurity in D.C.

- ❑ Grocery store access, public transportation access, housing costs, racism, and historic disinvestment all affect food insecurity rates in D.C. (Jones, L.N. (2024))
- ❑ 679,947 people live in the District
- ❑ In 2023, roughly 9% of households in D.C. were food insecure



# D.C. Landscape

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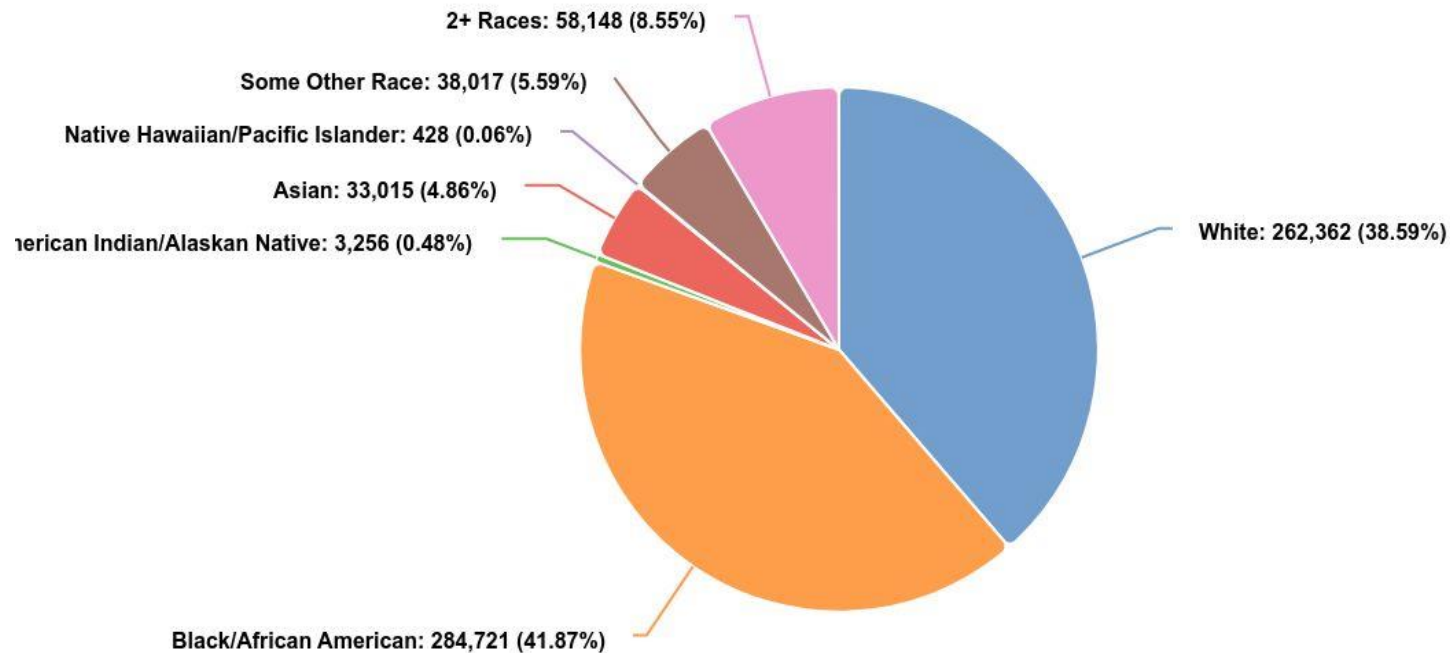
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# D.C.'s Population by Race

Population by Race

City: District of Columbia



Claritas, 2024. [www.dchealthmatters.org](http://www.dchealthmatters.org)

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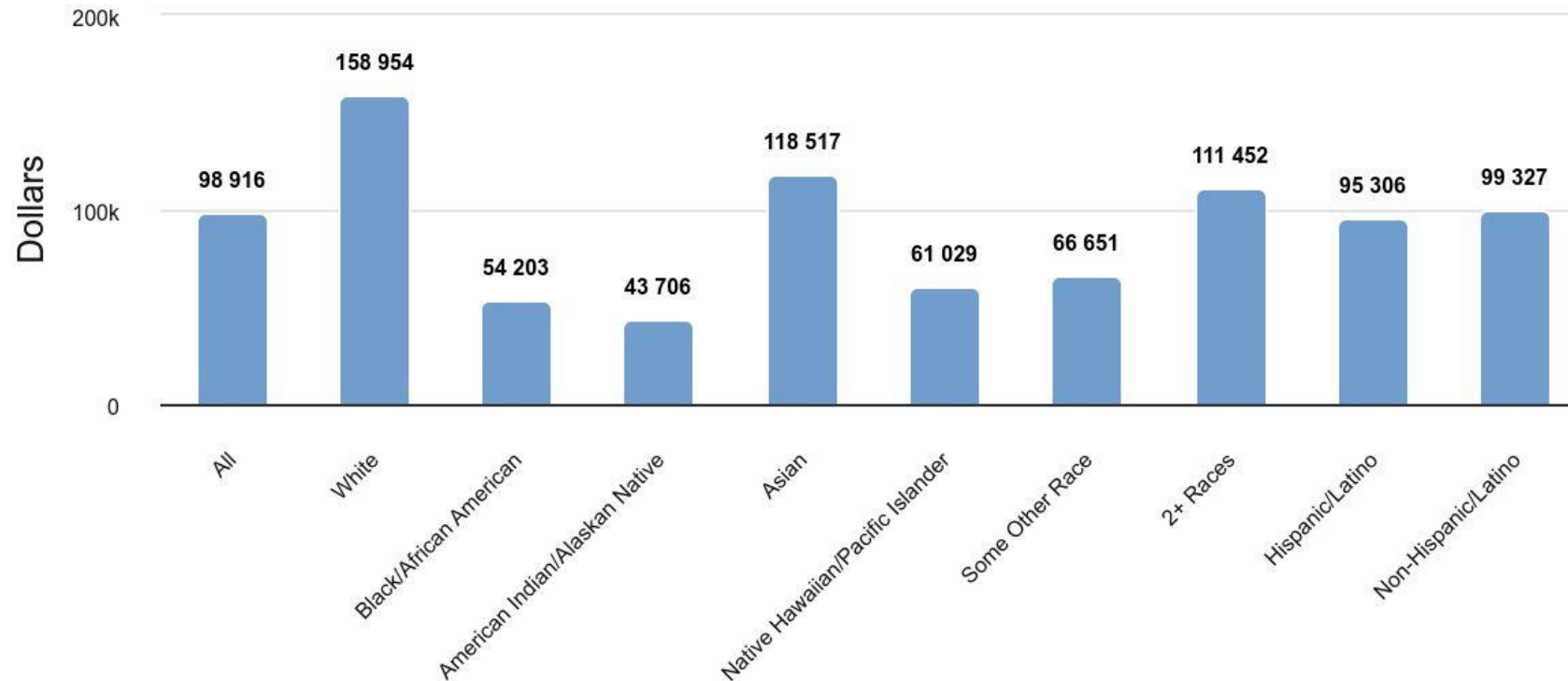
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# D.C.'s Wealth Gap

Median Household Income by Race/Ethnicity

City: District of Columbia



Claritas, 2024. [www.dchealthmatters.org](http://www.dchealthmatters.org)

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# D.C.'s Grocery Stores

- ❑ As of 2024, Ward 3 has 14 grocery stores while there is only one store East of the River (Giant on Alabama Ave SE)
- ❑ While grocery stores continue to be built in other wards, Wards 7 and 8 have been left behind



# Immigrant Families in D.C.

As of 2023:

- 95,435 District residents (roughly 14%) were born outside of the United States
- 30,704 children in the District (roughly 26%) have at least one parent born outside of the United States



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# Overview of SNAP



# What is SNAP?

- ❑ The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) is a federal nutrition program that provides monthly benefits on an EBT card to eligible individuals. It can be a useful tool to help households pay for groceries and maximize their budgets.
- ❑ SNAP can be used at most stores that sell food. It can be used to purchase non-prepared foods, as well as plants and seeds to grow your own food.
- ❑ Federal nutrition and food programs are crucial to addressing food insecurity; however, many may forgo these programs due to immigration-related concerns and lack of knowledge about the programs and their eligibility.



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# SNAP in the District

- About 141,300 District residents participate in SNAP
- For every \$1 spent on SNAP, \$1.80 of economic activity is generated. SNAP is a **stimulus program**.



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# What is a SNAP Household?

- ❑ A group of people who live together, buy food as a group, and prepare meals as a group. They do not have to be related.
- ❑ There are many scenarios in which more than one SNAP household can share the same residence.
- ❑ A SNAP household does not necessarily need a permanent address.



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# What is a SNAP Household? (cont.)

- ❑ The following people **must** be considered a household, even if they purchase food separately:
  - ❑ Spouses who live together
  - ❑ Parents and children under 22, even if the child is married or has a child of their own, who live together



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# SNAP Income Guidelines

- ❑ Two income guidelines:
  - ❑ Gross income: amount of income a household receives before taxes and deductions
    - ❑ Must be at or below 200% of the federal poverty guidelines
    - ❑ Households with older adults (60+) and people with disabilities not subject to gross income limits
  - ❑ Net income: amount of income a household has after taxes and deductions
    - ❑ Must be at or below 100% of the federal poverty guidelines



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# SNAP Income Guidelines

## (effective 10/1/2024 to 09/30/2025)

Household Size	Maximum Gross Monthly Income for Categorical Eligibility (200% FPL)	Maximum Net Monthly Income (100% FPL)	Maximum SNAP Allotment
1	\$2,510	\$1,255	\$292
2	\$3,408	\$1,704	\$536
3	\$4,304	\$2,152	\$768
4	\$5,200	\$2,600	\$975
5	\$6,098	\$3,049	\$1,158
6	\$6,994	\$3,497	\$1,390
7	\$7,890	\$3,945	\$1,536
8	\$8,788	\$4,394	\$1,756
Each Additional Member	+\$898	+\$449	+\$220

# Deductions

- ❑ A household's benefit level is determined by net income.
- ❑ Net monthly income = gross income minus applicable deductions
- ❑ The more expenses you have, the more likely you are to be eligible and the higher your benefit level could be.



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# SNAP Assets Guidelines

- ❑ Assets are typically not considered for SNAP in the District; however, applicants will be asked to complete this section on the application.
- ❑ Assets include cash, money in the bank, investments, and property.



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# Deductions

- ❑ Earned Income Deduction: 20% of earnings from a job
- ❑ Dependent Care Deduction: out-of-pocket dependent care expenses that are necessary for a household member to work or go to school
- ❑ Excess Shelter Deduction: for housing costs exceeding half of net income (capped at \$712 unless at least one household member is an older adult or a person with a disability)



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# Deductions

- ❑ Child Support Deduction: for legally-obligated child support a household member pays
- ❑ Medical Expense Deduction: for out-of-pocket medical expenses greater than \$35/month (only for older adults and people with disabilities)
- ❑ Standard Utility Allowance Deduction: for households who pay utilities such as gas, electric, water, and phone
- ❑ Standard Deduction: all households – accounts for basic costs



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# SNAP Eligibility for Immigrants

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# SNAP Rules for Immigrant Households

- ❑ To be eligible for SNAP benefits, you must be a U.S. citizen or have a certain lawfully-present non-citizen status.
- ❑ Non-citizens who are eligible based on immigration status must also meet the other SNAP eligibility requirements, such as income limits.



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# Groups eligible to apply for SNAP immediately

- ❑ All U.S. citizens
- ❑ Refugees
- ❑ Individuals granted asylum
- ❑ Victims of severe trafficking (T non-immigrant status)
- ❑ Deportation withheld
- ❑ Amerasians
- ❑ Cuban and Haitian entrants
- ❑ Iraqi and Afghan special immigrants (SIV)
- ❑ Certain American Indians born abroad
- ❑ Hmong or Highland Laotian tribal members
- ❑ Compacts of Free Association (COFA) citizens of the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and the Republic of Palau



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## Groups eligible to apply after 5-year waiting period

- Lawful permanent residents (LPR) or Green Card holders
- Those granted parole for a period of at least one year
- Conditional entrants
- Battered non-citizens



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**Individuals in one of the groups on the previous slide may still be eligible for SNAP without a waiting period if they:**

- Are a child under 18 years old
- Are blind or disabled and receiving benefits for assistance for your condition
- Were lawfully residing in the U.S. and 65 or older on Aug. 22, 1996
- Have a U.S. Military connection
- Are an Afghan granted parole
- Are a Ukrainian granted parole



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# SNAP Rules for Immigrants – Common Ineligible Statuses

- Non-citizen college students and H-1B Visa workers
- Undocumented immigrants
- Individuals with Temporary Protected Status (TPS)
- Most individuals with a U Visa
- Individuals currently applying for asylee, refugee, or victim of trafficking status
- “DREAMers”/DACA recipients



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# Benefit Calculation for Immigrant Households

- ❑ Two state options for calculating mixed-status household income:
  - ❑ Count a pro-rated share of income and deductions of the ineligible household member, **OR**
  - ❑ Count none of the income and deductions of the ineligible household member
- ❑ D.C. counts a pro-rated share. What does this mean?
  - ❑ To calculate a benefit, D.C. will use a fraction of the income and deductions that reflects the number of eligible people in the household.



# Benefit Calculation for Immigrant Households in D.C.

- ❑ Imagine a household of four people. In this household, there are three eligible members, and one non-eligible non-citizen.
- ❑ In this scenario, the person with the non-eligible status earns \$1000/month in income and pays \$400/month in shelter expenses.



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# Benefit Calculation for Immigrant Households in D.C.

- ❑ To calculate the household's benefit, income and expenses are divided by the total number of household members then multiplied by the total number of *eligible* household members.
- ❑ To calculate the household's benefit, the household's income would be calculated as  $\$1000/4$  household members =  $\$250$ , multiplied by 3 eligible members =  $\$750$  in household income.
- ❑ Similarly, the household's shelter expenses would be calculated as  $\$400/4 = \$100$ , multiplied by 3 eligible members =  $\$300$  in household shelter expenses.



# Executive Orders and Public Charge

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# Executive Orders

“Community members should understand that eligibility for public assistance programs has not changed. People who are eligible should continue to apply for and receive services that will improve their health and well-being.”

(2025 [Message](#) from the National Immigration Law Center)



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# Public Charge

Some people who apply for US green cards and visas must pass the "public charge" test--which looks at whether the person is likely to rely on certain government services in the future.



# Public Charge

- ❑ Two government services are considered:
  - ❑ Monthly cash support. This includes Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), and state and locally-based cash assistance programs
  - ❑ Long-term “institutional” health care, like in a nursing home, paid for by the government
- ❑ Immigration officials cannot consider use of other government programs. They cannot consider any government programs used by others in your household, even if your name is on your family member’s application.



# The following programs are not considered as part of the public charge test:

- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) or other nutrition programs
- Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)
- School lunch and school breakfast programs
- Benefits under the Emergency Food Assistance Act (TEFAP)
- Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)
- Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR)
- Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP)
- Medicaid and other health care (except long-term institutional care)
- Housing benefits
- Food banks
- Shelters



# Frequently Asked Questions

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# SNAP FAQs – Language Access

- ❑ Do I need to speak English to receive benefits?
  - ❑ No. You can receive benefits regardless of the language you speak, and you have the right to receive interpretation services. Additionally, written translation of vital documents into commonly-spoken non-English languages must be provided by DHS.
  - ❑ D.C. agencies with major public contact must follow the requirements of the Language Access Act of 2004.



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# SNAP FAQs – Public Charge

- ❑ Will applying for or receiving SNAP benefits affect my immigration status?
  - ❑ **NO!** Applying for and receiving SNAP benefits for yourself or a member of your household **will not** result in any “public charge” or affect your ability to remain in the United States, obtain or keep LPR status, or become a U.S. citizen.
  - ❑ Public charge is considered for certain non-citizens when applying for visas, admission, or adjustment of status. The only considerations are for public cash assistance for income maintenance and institutionalization for long-term care at government expense.
  - ❑ [NATIONAL - Public Charge Test and Guide | Keep Your Benefits](#) - a tool families can use to see whether public benefits affect public charge



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# SNAP FAQs – Mixed-Status Households

- ❑ Can I apply for an eligible family member even if I am not eligible based on my immigration status?
  - ❑ Yes! Only eligible household members are required to share information about their immigration status. DHS *cannot* ask for immigration information from ineligible members.
  - ❑ For example, ineligible parents can apply on behalf of their eligible children. The parents will need to provide proof of identity and D.C. residency, as well as proof of income and shelter expenses if applicable. DHS *cannot* ask for immigration information from ineligible members.



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# SNAP FAQs – Mixed-Status Households

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## Apply for benefits

Do you want Food assistance? Required

--Please Select--



--Please Select--

Yes

No

Next



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# Federal Nutrition Programs

- ❑ The following federal nutrition programs are available to all people, regardless of immigration status, and are not considered as part of the public charge test.
  - ❑ Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC)
  - ❑ School Meals
  - ❑ Summer Nutrition Programs
    - Summer EBT ("SunBucks") - \$120 benefit/child
    - DC Youth Meals Program – 2025 site list available soon
  - ❑ Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)



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# Local Programs

- ❑ Emergency Food/Food Banks
  - ❑ [Need Help? | Food Assistance in the DC Region | Capital Area Food Bank](#)
- ❑ Local Community-Based Organizations
- ❑ Churches
- ❑ Mutual Aid Groups
- ❑ Undocumented immigrants in D.C. may be eligible for health insurance through the Immigrant Children's Program and D.C. Health Care Alliance

# Questions?

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# Post-Training Survey



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- Public Charge "3 Things You Need to Know" - [Jan Copy of English\\_3 Things You Need To Know](#)
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- Public Charge Test and Guide from Keepyourbenefits.org - [NATIONAL - Public Charge Test and Guide | Keep Your Benefits](#)
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- Economic Security Administration (ESA) Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Policy Manual (2025) - <https://dhs.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/dhs/publication/attachments/Final%20ESA%20SNAP%20Policy%20Manual%201.24.25.pdf>
- SunBucks - | [sunbucks](#)
- DC Youth Meals Program - [DC Youth Meals Program | osse](#)





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